

THE
Great Salvation
In another
WORLD,
Ascertain'd as to
FAITH,
And consider'd as to
PRACTICE.

By *William Smith*, D. D.

L O N D O N :

Printed for R. Clavel, at the Peacock in St. Paul's
Church-Yard, 1696.

THE

Illustration

WORLD.

FAITH.

PRACTICE.

By William Smith, D.D.

LONDON:

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T O
AUGUSTIN BRIGGS, Esq;
Mayor of Norwich.

S I R,

IN observance of your Request, and to perform my Promise upon it, I have permitted the publishing this Discourse: But as to what induced you, with some others, to desire it of me, I am yet to seek, how to make a tolerable Conjecture. Only in this I satisfy my self, that whatsoever is found defective in it, so as not to deserve a Publick View, may possibly be shelter'd under an interpretation, that it was desired of me as from your own Personal kindness to me; improved perhaps, for the
sake

The Epistle Dedicatory.

*sake of an Excellent Person Your worthy
Father, my most Especial Friend, now
with God.*

*And for that reason, tho' I might please
no body else, I should be very unworthy of
your Friendship, and his Memory, if I
should not think it sufficiently satisfactory
to my self, that I have pleas'd you.*

*This is the true Figure of my Mind and
Thoughts, by which I am always ready
to approve my self.*

Your very real Friend

W. S.

ACTS xvi. xxx.

Sirs, What must I do to be saved ?

I shall not Abridge my intended Useful Enlargements upon so plain and short a Text.

There needs no far fetch'd train of Pretexts for a long Introductive Preface to Usher it in.

Nor shall I trouble you with any Historical Narrative of the Jaylor's Person, or of those Circumstances in which he was at that time, when he made his Pious Request to the Apostles, to know what he should do to be Saved.

Such as are Considerable enough for your Notice, will Occur in the following Periods of my Discourse.

But the sum of my Design at present is, only to Entertain your Attentions with two Useful Subjects of Discourse, Naturally deduced from the Text, and from what relates to it.

I. The First is, to represent the Jaylor's Intent and Meaning, as to what kind of Salvation it was, which he Enquired after, when he desired the Apostles to Inform him, What he should do to be Saved.

II. The

II. The Second, shall be to Exhibit an Uncontrollable Argument, that the same Rational Motives which induced the Jaylor then to Enquire for Directions, how he might be Saved, ought always to be upon our Minds and Thoughts, and to begin the same presently without Delay upon any Pretence whatsoever.

And tho' it then happened, that the Jaylor went about it, when he lay under the pressing Sense of his own certain Ruin, upon the fear of his Prisoners escape, according to the severity of the *Roman Law* in such a Case; yet I shall prove the Obligation to be the same upon us at all Times, and in all Conditions. These Two I shall pursue with the clearest Demonstrations I can.

I. As to the First proposed Subject, that is, what kind of Salvation it was, which the Jaylor Enquired after. I am satisfied it was Ultimately the Salvation of his Soul in a future World; tho' with a desire also to be Directed by what Means he might come to the obtaining of it.

And I know not any Expositor that so much as questioneth this Sense of it, and I am sure the Apostles Answer, in directing him to Embrace the Christian Religion, how it was to be Obtained, doth necessarily Evince it.

And now we being thus ascertained, that the Jaylor's Concern was for the Salvation of his Soul
in

in another World, it can't be presum'd, that I should let such a mighty Case and Subject pass, without some remarkable Reflexions upon it, by way of Application.

The Salvation of Souls in an Eternal State, being a matter of the highest Importance, and most valuable Concern, with which the Mind of Man can possibly be Affected.

But because this short space of time, in which I am to manage it, will not admit such Enlargements of Application, as were expedient; I shall therefore limit your Attentions to such only, as may be adjudg'd most seasonable, that is most accommodable to the present Needs of Mens Minds according to the Humour of the Times in which they are to Act, and Converse. Thus, *Δουλεύειν τῷ κυρίῳ*. (*Rom. 12. 11.*) to serve the Time, in a proper Sense.

Now forasmuch as we live in an Age, observably, by Mens Lives and Actions, of great Degeneracy from Religion, and in which they seem too generally to be very Careless and Inconsiderate of what shall become of them in the other World, I thought it now Expedient, to move my Application towards the care of such a Dangerous, and almost Epidemical Distemper.

And for that End, perhaps it might be thought proper, and sufficient enough, if I should intently only Urge, St. Paul's formidable Caution, (*Heb. 2. 3.*) *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation?*

But our present Case requires much more; For we are not now only to Caution Men from Neglecting

their Salvation; but it's Incumbent upon us at this time, to take special Care, how to preserve Men from entering into a real Unbelief, or at least into a heedless uncertain Faith of any such State of Salvation at all: Nay, sometimes from making it a Ridicule, and oftentimes from some Mens mocking at all those Religious Methods designed for the attainment of it.

And you know but little of the World, if you have not heard, that there be many of the Ingeniously Vicious, who having no other Expedient to solve the folly and unreasonableness of their Leud and Prophane Practices, are necessitated, to save their Credit, to study all that is possible, to become speculative Unbelievers, as Atheists, particularly as to the Faith of another World.

And from the Influence of those Mens accustomed Buffoonries, and leud Examples, it is, that too many of the unheeding and careless part of common Men, are encouraged to grow every day more and more unconcerned, whether there be any such things, as a Judgment to come, or a future State at all: And are resolved to run the hazard of a *come what will on it*, rather than quit their Scandalous Sensualities, and Unjust Practices; or live unconformably to the fashion of a vicious and foolish World.

And if the Case stand thus with us, (as I am afraid it is too true) then surely it can't be thought, but that the best Use and Application which ought to be made of this great Subject in hand, were to undertake an arguing some Mens Minds and Reasons into a firm Belief, and others into a more sensible apprehension, that there is infallibly such a State to come, in which
there

there will be the certain Events of Eternal Salvation, or Damnation.

And I hope this will be accounted a contending for the Faith (*Jude 3.*) in a very approveable sense.

And tho' at this time I must not presume to go through with it, with such enlargements of Proof, as so great a Case requires, yet I shall endeavour it (I hope) to your satisfaction, by contracting my Thoughts into a lesser Compass, lest I swell this Paragraph of my Discourse, into an unallowable Proportion.

And therefore to shorten the Work, I shall not trouble your Patience, as to the Proof of another Worlds Existence, by what may be said about the Souls Immortality; as it hath been, and still is, the more general Sense of Mankind. And for this I could produce a Cloud of Witnesses, both from Historical and Philosophical Authorities, if time would admit.

And tho' many of those Philosophers spake variously and uncertainly; and the Learned, Ancient Poets very Romanickly in their Ingenious Fictions; and the numerous *Mahometans* at this day most fondly and sensually of the surviving State of Humane Things: Yet it's enough to shake the Foundations of all Atheistical pretensions, that they all intimated an agreement in the main Point of a future Existence; they could not get leave of their Reason to avoid the Sense of it.

And then, as for their wild Ways of stating the Manner of it, it doth not at all invalidate the Truth, but rather confirms it: For as much as in any Christians themselves, especially the School-men, have run the Notion of the State of the dead, into almost as extravagant Conjectures, as some Heathens had done.

And all this ariseth from Mens undutiful Curiosities, to open the Curtain upon that Secret, which Almighty God, for Reasons (I doubt not) accountable to himself, and for the good of Mankind, hath concealed from our present perfect Knowledge. 'Tis now saith the Apostle, (1 Cor. 13. 12.) *¶* *in ænigmati*, that is, darkly, or as represented in a Riddle, as the original Word imports.

It's sufficient for God's Designs, that there should be so much known in all Ages concerning that State, as might serve for a sufficient Reason and Encouragement to oblige Men to live Good and Vertuous Lives; and to affect their hopes, that all shall be well in the End with them, who truly Fear him and honestly Serve Him.

But now to avoid all Censure of being too short in so mighty a Case, and withal consulting the confinements of my Time, I shall enlarge upon such Proofs (and such only) as may be improved from all unprejudiced Mens Observations, as they may easily and naturally occur to their Thoughts and Notice.

In which I doubt not but to say so much, as may give a full satisfaction to all, that need a further assurance in that Important Point of a Life to come, and of the Jaylor's great Salvation in that State.

And First, Let our studied Unbelievers, and all others whose Minds are any ways disordered as to any real Sense of another World, but engage their Thoughts and Reason to look first Abroad upon the Species of Mankind in general, and then think, whether it's any way probable, that God should Create a sort of Creatures, who of all Visible Beings, are only En-

Endued with Rational and Reflecting Minds; and yet be Naturally subjected to greater and more numerous Miseries and sensible Calamities, than all other the Existing Beings of the whole World besides, put all together, even with an Exception to those, which Men may be said voluntarily to bring upon themselves.

So that if it were possible, that all the Miserable of Mankind were at any time in one View to be represented, and that every sorrowful Heart were to tell the sad Stories of his own afflicted Mind: That is, if all those who at any present time lay under the pressing sense of Pains and Torments; All that are pining in languishing Diseases, or pinch'd with wants of Necessaries; All that are withering out their old Age in Contempt, Uselessness, and as a Burden to others: All that are made Drudges, to serve the Ambitions and Pleasures of a few: And Lastly, all such, as in a long continuance of extremity in troubles of Mind, Body, or Fortune, lay under Temptations, to Sigh out their time in heavy Wishes never to have been at all: I say, if all these could possibly be placed in one Prospect, who is it that would not be too apt to think, that a great part of Mankind would even seem to Live in an Hospital of the Miserable, rather than in a Region of so much Ease and Convenience, as might acquit the Infinite Goodness of the great Creator, why he gave Man a Being, and then permitted him to Live in such hazzards of being possibly Miserable a thousand Ways; and at last in a short time to be shut up in a Night of nothing, like a dead Fly, without any following Compensation? Nothing, but the belief of another World, can possibly solve this Difficulty in a thinking Mind.

But

But further, let our silly Prodigals of their Souls, (as concurrent with this) make another prospect of the State of Mankind, from an universally acknowledged Observation of the promiscuous Usages and Events of the Good and Evil in this World: Which puzzel'd the Minds of the most Learned Opposers of the Christian Religion, as might easily be shewn if time would allow it.

And from thence let our Bravadoes in Unbelief consider, whether it's possible, that any Man of Reason should entertain such unworthy Thoughts of a Wise and Kind Creator, that such numbers of Unjust and Unworthy Men should ever be permitted to have it in their power, to ride in Triumph upon the Necks and Ruins of the Good and Harmless, and that such Oppressed good Men, must remedilessly bear the Characters of the Unfortunate to their Lives End; and then become Nothing, without any possible Redress for the Future.

And how can this be solved to the Honour of the Great God, without a Belief, that Mankind should elsewhere Exist after their Mortal Durations; and thereby be Blessed with the Great Salvation in the Life to come?

And this is the first Reasoning Experiment to be made by Observations from Abroad, to ascertain the Being of another World, and a State of Salvation to be expected in it.

2. The next Advertisement I give to those of unwilling Minds to, Believe the Being of another World, is, That they would turn the use of their Reason
in-

inward, and look if they can't make some Observations from every Man's created Nature within, to give them a full Assurance that there is such a State in future. That is, let them try, whether there be not some Dispositions or Qualifications, sovereignly implanted in their Natures, which must exert their Operations with the same Necessity, that inanimate Beings must necessarily follow the Conduct of that Instinct and Impulse which the Creator put upon their several Natures, oftentimes to act contrary Motions and Operations. And then let them observe, whether there be nothing in those Qualifications, which God implanted in Man's Nature on purpose out of Kindness to prevent his *Undoing* in another World by Sin and Impenitence: And which may afford an Evidence for the assur'd Existence of such a State to come.

Now of those natural Qualifications, though there be many, yet I shall instance but in two only.

The First of those natural Dispositions or Qualifications, is, that unavoidably Men's Minds will have an uneasie, and sometimes a tormenting Sense of Guilt upon them, after Crimes committed: And which must forebode something that is very terrible to come, after their mortal Lives are ended.

And this may easily be manifested to be true, when it's observ'd, that such a Sense of Guilt will pursue such Criminals, though their Crimes were committed with the profoundest Secrecy; and when those guilty Persons enjoy'd all the Advantages of Human Life to divert and extinguish their terrifying Apprehensions of it.

And

And further, in Proof of this, though I might produce as many Authors upon that Subject, as almost in any other Case whatsoever, yet I only chuse now to offer what the Heathen Poet *Juvenal* could aver concerning some *Roman* Emperors,

---*Non tamen hostes*

Evassisse putes, quos diu conscia facti

Mens habet attonitos, & surdo verberare cedit.

Though they had, saith he, conquered all their Enemies abroad, yet their Consciences created some more terrible ones within; which severely scourg'd them with the invisible Stroaks of their own guilty Minds.

It was this intolerable Sense of Guilt, that choak'd *Judas* with Sorrow; when it's probable, he might otherwise have shifted well enough in the World with what he might get from his Bag-office, and with the Bargain he had made to betray his Master, had not his guilty Mind arrested him with the unsupportable Terrors of a Judgment, and a Hell to come.

Whence is it else, that such a Sense should always float upon the Surface of Mens guilty Minds and Memories! Witness that of *Joseph's* Brethren, when distressed in a Case of a foreign Nature, *Verily, say they, we are guilty concerning our Brother, (Gen. 42. 21.)* And as it was with *Herod*, when they were conjecturing, who Christ should be, he quickly had it ready in his guilty Mind, *It's John, saith he, whom I beheaded (Mark 6. 16.)* And hence come the frightful Conflicts of most dying wicked Men, when their Souls are convuls'd with unaccountable Terrors, after a long continued Habit of Impenitence,

and

and a wilful Disregard to all God's indearing Tenders of Grace and Mercy.

It can't be supposed, but that they must have then a sense of some Terrible thing to come after their last Breath should Land them into another state of Beings. This Terror they could not at that time avoid, by all the confident Pretensions which they before made use of, to elude that their Natural disposition, which God had purposely Implanted in their Natures, that by their sense of such an unhappy state of Mind, they might the more readily and naturally look out for Relief by taking wiser measures for their own everlasting Good and present Ease.

But then Secondly, There is another Quality naturally implanted in all Mens Minds by a Merciful Creator, and consequent to that Natural sense of Guilt ; and that is, that all Wicked Men must necessarily and unavoidably endure the sorrowful and shameful work of Repenting themselves of their wicked Actions at one time or other. Either in this World by Improving that natural necessary Quality with a timely Repentance to Salvation, or else it will Exert it self to be an Everlasting Punishment (perhaps the severest) in such Wicked Mens endless Scenes of Misery.

And as this Disposition was naturally given to Mankind by God's Mercy, so it will for ever acquit his Justice, tho' such Wicked Men be Eternally Punished for Sins transiently committed in time :

Because the duration of their Punishments shall be no longer, than according to the impress Instinct of their Natures, which the Good Creator gave them in Kindness.

And further it may be supposed, that in their Sinning State, they could not be altogether insensible of the Immortality of their Beings, especially if they had as carefully consulted their Reason, as they did Voluntarily all along, attend to the vain Solicitations of their lower Appetites and Affections to over-rule that beneficial disposition of their Nature, to their own Eternal Ruin.

And thus I have Arraigned our resolved Unbelievers, and inconsiderate Halters in the Faith, at the Bar of their own Reason, only upon what may be deduc'd from matters of common Observation from abroad, and within, if attended to *with serious* Consideration.

But I have yet more to say to stumble our pretenders to the unbelief of another World : And that is, that besides these Demonstrations from natural Observations, there is moreover a sufficient Revelation by the Christian Religion, which *brought Immortality to light*, (2 Tim. 1. 10.)

Not but that a Good God, had before allowed his World of Rational Beings a demonstrable Notice, by some natural Evidences, of a State to come, sufficient for their Safety then, if they would have attended to the use of their natural Understandings; and also to such Divine Assistances, which may be presumed an Impartially Good God might bestow upon them, in the Name of Christ (*Acts* 4. 13.) That is, for the Sake or Cause of the Lamb Virtually slain from the Foundation of the World (*Rev.* 13. 8.) Otherwise how could it reasonably be affirmed, *that he died for all Men*, (2 Cor. 5. 15.) or *That he tasted death for every Man*, (Heb. 2. 9.) if all of the former World were absolutely Excepted from all the Benefits of his Univer-

sal:

ful Redemption, which Redemption will be Propitious to all them, who are not wilfully guilty of the Ignorance of it; or which being known, do not as wilfully refuse the Conditions of it, and so make themselves incapable of its Blessings.

And now the Reason, why Almighty God might so long respite the ascertaining Mankind of another Life by Revelation, I am apt to believe, it was because the World, upon several possible accounts, (best known to Himself) was not in Temper, nor yet in fit Circumstances, to receive an assurance of such a State to come, by that happy Method.

But as soon as God saw the World was Prepared, and in Circumstances to admit it, he then opened the Doors of Heaven, and sent forth his Holy Son to Proclaim it, with the mighty Credentials of Divine Attestation.

So that the Being of a future World is now (as *1 Tim. 1. 15.*) made Credible by a sufficient Testimony, which before (as to the greatest part of Mankind) was only to be made demonstrable by natural Principles, and rational Evidence.

And that it may be said, that we are now Saved by Faith (*Eph. 2. 5.*) that is, if we act all the methods of our Salvation by the Influence of that Powerful Principle. And it's a great Mercy of God to the general State of Mankind, that it should be so: It being far easier to Mens Minds in common, to Believe by Testimony, than to depend upon the necessity of Reasoning by Demonstration; or as the *Jews* had it by obscurer intimations, and by some Prophecy not to be unaccomplished, till that fulness of Time, or seasonable Opportunity was come, when the long expected *Messiah* should appear. (*Gal. 4. 4.*)

Now what can our Hectoring Unbelievers, or Men of careless and inconsiderate Minds say to all this?

Can they, dare they, Controul the Validity of such a Divine Attestation, as the Gospel Exhibits for another World? Either they must plainly and positively prove, that the whole Gospel is False, and the Religion of it a Cheat, and our Saviour an Impostor; or they are utterly lost and undone by their Atheistical Pretensions, upon which they licence themselves to live in their Vicious and Leud Practices; or at best to act only for their Worldly Ease, and present Pleasures.

I say again, are they sure, Infallibly sure, that they have Arguments sufficient enough to over-rule the Truth of Christianity, so as to adventure the Eternal Loss of their Souls upon it?

A Truth which even to this day hath so controul'd all publish'd Contests by fair Trials of Learning, that the Vast Nations which do now Embrace a Religion in opposition to it, are necessitated to let their People creep in the dark shades of Ignorance, to preserve their fond Persuasions from any Learned Discourses, or Rational Inquisitions.

And now who would Venture the Loss of an Eternal Safety, upon the hazard (if it were no more) that Christianity should not prove to be true at last?

The very Doubt of it upon such likelihoods of Truth, do not so much commend the Discretion of such, as take a liberty from thence to act only for the Concerns of the Vain and Transient World, and then lose their Souls at last.

This

This is the last Part of my Arguing Application, to ascertain the *Existence of the Great Salvation*.

And now having dispatch'd my First Subject of Discourse, upon that future Salvation, which the Jaylor Enquired after, and made the best Use and Application I could think proper, as to the Ages Irreligious Humour, I am fairly prepared to undertake the next Discourse I promised you.

And that is, To demonstrate by an uncontrollable Argument, that there is an Obligation upon every Man whomsoever, in the very instant, in which they now exist, without any pretensions, to make any delay of following the Jaylor's Example, in seeking after, and then acting, what they should do to be Saved.

And to make this Argument plainly Convincing, I shall move to the Conclusion of it, from these three Approveable Premises, apartly to be Considered.

I. First, I hope I need not Question your Belief, but that the only Season in which it is possible for any Man to persue and finish the Work of his Salvation, must be acted in the compass of his Mortal Life.

For when that short Scene is over, there will be no after Attempts to be made; no Rafts to save Life, after that Natural Shipwrack.

The foolish Virgins knock'd too late for Admission: The undressed Guest had no Apology for himself, when the time was elaps'd, in which he might have put on his Wedding Garment. This the First.

II. Second-

II. Secondly, as my next Promise, let me persuade you to consider, what the Worth is, which must be done in that short Season, before you can secure your Salvation at last.

And that I may assist your Thoughts and Memories therein, give me Leave to offer a summary Account, in few Words, of that Work, which is to be done to attain your Salvation.

First, I desire you to consider, what Work your Intellectual Faculties have to perform, that is, fully to understand, what that whole Will of God is, which must be done, if you expect ever to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, saith our Saviour (*Mat. 7. 21.*)

And are you sure, that you have done all that is morally possible in that Point, to avoid the Danger of perishing, for the willful Ignorance of your Duty in any Part of it?

And then have you inform'd your selves, how many unruly Passions you are to subdue; how many impetuous Appetites to be restrain'd; how many Temptations to contest and overcome; sometimes in Cases, which may perhaps make a Self-denial as severe, as if you were obliged to *pluck out your right Eye, or cut off your right Hand*, as our Saviour advertiseth (*Mat. 5. 29, 30.*) in a particular Case?

Then consider how nice and numerous the Cases of Justice and a peaceable Life are; and then to understand how necessary it is, that Satisfaction is to be undertaken, when Breaches are made as to either Duty.

After

After that I may put you in mind, how many Possibilities of doing good God hath allowed you ; and for the Omission of which, you will be accountable at the last Day (*Mat. 25.*)

Then advertise your selves, how many Prayers and Acts of Devotion will be sufficient, to answer *St. Paul's* Injunction of performing them without ceasing (*1 Thes. 5. 17.*)

And are you sure, you have discharged your Duty of receiving the holy Sacrament, with that Frequency, which *St. Paul* intimates (*1 Cor. 11. 25.*) and which holy Men in holy times carefully practised.

But to shorten this my Undertaking, take all the Commandments into a general View of your Consciences, and examin your selves, whether you live knowingly, deliberately, and habitually in the Transgression of any one of them.

And if so, then consider what must follow, that is, either your inevitable eternal Ruin, or a timely Repentance.

And when it is come to the Case of repenting, are you sure you have found out the true Notion of that necessary Duty, and the various Acts and Circumstances of performing it? It may cost you some Labour to be delivered from the mistaken Senses of them both.

And then when you come to lead a new Life (the chief End and Design of repenting.) and that you can't but observe the many Failings and Imperfections, which the greatest Care can't always avoid; And that then, nothing else but an intire Sincerity of Endeavour will avail; Your next Work then must be, how to acquit your Consciences, as to the Reality of that Sincerity.

A.

A Case that hath perplexed some very good Mens Minds unto their Lives End.

Now take all this whole work into one View, and seriously think with your selves, whether every Man is not necessarily oblig'd on that account, instantly to enter upon the Jaylor's Design in Enquiring what he should do to be Saved.

But if it be Objected, in confront to my Representation of this Work, (that the Apostles did only advertise the Jaylor, to Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and he *should be saved* (Ver. 31.)

In Answer to this, its to be presumed, that the Apostles intended that he should afterward take upon him, and proceed in, the whole Discipleship of Christ, of which Faith was to be but an entring and an initiating Grace, and Dury.

Had the Jaylor gone no further than Believing, he had stumbled at the Threshold of all his Hopes; as too many amongst us (I fear) have done, when they pretended to make Faith, as it were, an abridged Sum of the Gospel-Condition, not considering, that if they would enter into Life, besides their Faith, they must keep (*All*) the Commandments (*Mat. 19. 17.*) to which Faith was only designed to be a Beginning, and afterward to be a constant and necessary Attendant upon the whole Work. This is the Second of the Premises.

III. The Third and Last, which gives the full force to the Argument for a speedy present Undertaking the Jaylor's Enquiry after his Salvation, 'Tis the uncertainty of every Man's Continuance in this short Life to do so Great a Work: Always fearing, lest too long a presumptuous

sumptuous neglect, should provoke God to cut a Man off before it's done. Our time is in God's Hand, (as the Psalmist saith *Psal.* 31. 17.) that is, unaccountably to shorten or lengthen it as he pleases. 'Tis his Divine Privilege.

And then who could think, that any Man, who hath the least spark of Faith, or even of Reason in his Mind, could be so desperately adventurous, as to defer the acting that Saving Work for his Soul one Hour longer, lest in the very next (beyond which he hath no absolute assurance to Exist,) he be left to an impossibility of ever-after, either to Act or Hope for his Deliverance, from being as Miserable a Wretch as can enjoy a Being?

I say, if the Case stands so with him, why should he any more sit down to Eat, or go about to close his Eyes to Sleep, (*quis hoc sub Casu ducere possit Somnos?*) one Night more, till he hath taken a firm Resolution. the next Mornning to make an Entrance upon that Happy Work?

And for the keeping him awake in that present Night to think of it, it were well for him, if his Conscience would lay him down in that posture, which the Prophet ingeniously describes, (*Isa.* 28. 20.) that is, that *his Bed should be shorter then he can stretch himself upon it, and his Covering narrower then he can wrap himself in it.*

And if his Uneasiness can perswade him to bethink himself of Enquiring after, and then Acting for his Future Salvation, it would prove the most Propitious Night, that ever he were like to enjoy in his whole Life.

Oh consider this ye that forget God, lest he pluck you away before your Work is done, and there be none to Deliver you. Make no tarrying to turn to the Lord, and put not off from day to day, (*Eccles. 5. 7.*)

And thus I have fairly represented to you, as well as I could, the Conclusive stress of my designed Argument, why every one of you, even the Youngest, Strongest, and most Prosperous amongst you, should in this instant go about to begin, and then to go on in the business of the Jaylor's Enquiry, *What shall I do to be Saved?*

And now presuming that I have said enough to Convince your Reason of the certain Existence of a State to come, in which Salvation is to be attained; And also plainly represented the Great Work you have to do in order to it; (with an assurance that the Gospel hath declared it to be no less) my Design now is, to stir up your Minds with the most Affectionate and Zealous Purposes presently, without any pretence of Delay on any account whatsoever, to enter upon that most Important Business, by the force of two persuasive Motives, with which if you refuse to be Affected, I know not what can be said more to bring you to a sense of Religion, and to the care of your Eternal Welfare.

I. The First of them, which I offer to the Minds of the delaying Neglecters of their own Salvation, is to Consider, that God in his Infinite Loving-kindness hath so ordered it, that in the same instant in which an inconsiderate Sinner begins with the Jaylor to be Enquiring after his Saving Business, in the same instant he makes his first Step towards God's beginning Favour; and

and if he shall Religiously go on for his own Everlasting Interest, he may assure himself then of his peculiar Love and Blessing, but not till then.

As if God had most kindly confin'd, almost all the Services to be done to himself, to such Actions only which Man is oblig'd to perform for his own chiefest Good and Happiness.

And as if God should say to them, Do but mind your own principal Concern: Be but Wise for your selves: Do but forbear such things as must Infallibly tend to your Eternal Ruin, I am Served, I am then Pleas'd.

Be but your own Friends, and I am then yours, even upon these Terms, and for that very Reason.

But if Men resolve Obstinately to continue in their Delay, and still go on to neglect their own Saving Good, they are to Believe, that so long God hath nothing to do with them, any more than they have to do with God. For all that unhappy while of delay, God is, as it were an Alien to them, and stands at distance from them: And that not only as a Stranger, but as yet as an Enemy.

Only so far Reconcil'd to them, that as soon as they shall go about to Mind and Act for their own Chiefest Good and Interest, they shall readily be accepted to Peace with him.

Oh then I Beseech you all, that are at this time conscious of your Obstinate or Careless Neglect hitherto, don't let God and your Souls stand at these odds any longer; but presently go about your Salvation-busines with this certain Encouragement, that you shall then assuredly come to God, as to your Friend, and into his Gra-

cious Arms, which are always open Joyfully to receive you. He will then become your Guide, your Protector, and Blessing, (Oh dread that heavy Word) but not till then, This is the First Perswasive Motive.

II. The next is, with an assurance, that as that Saving Work will bring you first to God, and to his Favour, and to a Communion with him; so the first Step you make toward your own Salvation, you do not only come to Him, but you come to be your selves, according to your own Rational Nature, as you are Men.

For all the while that inconsiderate Men refuse to Live according to the Measures of Religious Wisdom, in order to their own Safety in a future World, they are not to be accounted in a Moral sense Rational Creatures, but are to be reckon'd among such, as are besides themselves, or out of their Senses, (as it's vulgarly Phrased) that is, they all the while may be thought to act as mad or distracted Men. Or it may be said of them, that they have changed their Human Natures into another Species of Beings, that is, by some Sins, into the Nature of Devils, (St. Paul calls some of them *Διαισάντες*, Tit. 2. 3.) Or that they may have assumed the Nature of Brutes in other Sins, (St. Peter calls some such brut Beasts, *2 Pet. 2. 12.*) Or they may be said to act according to the senseless Humour of Fools, (our Saviour calls one of them by that name; *Luke 12. 20.*) but by no means, they must not be allowed to act according to the Quality, Reason, and sober Counsels of Intellectual Beings.

And if some such half or no Men, who drown their Intellectual Faculties, in the pleasures of Sense: And others who employ their Minds and Time in the acquisitions

sitions of some heightning degrees of Wealth or Honour, shall be offended, and think themselves too wise to be so reproached by these my severe Representations; and shall scornfully Deride us, as the greatest Fools for doing so; let them tell themselves, that for certain at one time or other, especially when they are in a near prospect of their Dying Periods, they will justify us to their Cost, that all that I have said is true. And then may wish, that I had exposed their Follies with greater degrees of Severity, that they might caution their Friends and Relatives, no longer to play the Fools in such comparatively ridiculous ways of Living, as must necessarily hazard the loss of God's Love, and Favour; the sweet Peace of their own Minds, and their being Eternally at last Undone in a future World.

And then let them consider, whether their Unbelieving Principles, or their hopes of any worldly Advantages, can shelter them from those dreadful Events.

But now on the other hand, let them be assured, that whensoever any of those sinful and foolish Delayers shall begin to enter upon thoughts, and sincere purposes, to act for their Eternal Salvation; they shall certainly then make the first Step, and begin to be themselves; come into their Wits, come out out of Bedlam, and act their own Rational Natures, so as to deserve the honourable Title of being Men.

Of this the wise *Ecclesiastes* gives us a clear assurance, *Fear God, saith he, and keep his Commandments, (Eccel. 12. 13.)* *וְיִרְאָה וְיִשְׁמַר. This is Man.* Not as some mistakingly would have it, the Duty, or the whole Duty of Man; but positively this is Man; which he was not justly to be so accounted, till a Religious Mind and Life had made him one. And

And then further, when he goes about to turn himself to be a Man (St. *Paul* calls it the new Man,) he will every day be more and more improving himself for a Happy Life, even in this VWorld; so far as a mortal State will admit of it, with the common allays of the Worlds unavoidable Inconveniencies.

His Pious Mind will never let him want a directive Guide how to manage his best Prosperity discreetly, and satisfactorily to himself; and create a Love and a Respect from all that depend upon him; and most probably a Friendship from all those, with whom he converseth, and holds Neighbourly communions.

And if it happens, that any adverse Fortune, or cross Accidents sometimes occur, his wise and religious Mind will be ready to suggest Reasons enough, why he should bear them patiently; sometimes even Eligibly; and always Thankfully.

And if he hears the noise of VVars and National Commotions, when VWorldly Men are harrassing their Minds with Fears and passionate Concerns for Parties and Interests, he bears the Character of the *Psalmist's Blessed Man that fears the Lord*, (*Psal. 112*) that is, (Verse the seventh) *He will not be afraid of any Evil Tidings; for his Heart standeth fast, and believeth in the Lord.* He quietly awaits God's Pleasure in the Issue and Event of things, and is content that he should be Glorified either in his Mercy, or Justice, as he pleases.

And if our Pious regarder of his Salvation, shall perceive, that the days are coming on, in which he is like to have no pleasure in them, he will be so far from troubling himself with murmuring complaints, that God gave him a Mortal Life on those (as Worldlings imagine,)

gine,) hard terms ; that he shall intellectually rejoyce, that God and Nature allows him such a respite, in which he may have time perfectly to Extirpate the very relicts of every evil Habit, contracted perhaps in the inadvertent part of his Life. And then that all the beguiling temptations of the vain VWorld, are now growing every day more and more pleasantly insipid to him.

And then it being presum'd that in his declining Age he may have less to do with the Affairs of the VWorld, and but little attendance to be given to the Satisfactions of Sense, he finds that he hath a happy leisure, to be endeavouring to dress up his Soul with such Divine Qualifications, as may make himself as like, as possible, to the Nature of that Good God, especially in his impartially Universal Love and Goodness ; unto whose Beatifical Presence he hopes ere long to have a merciful admission.

And when he is endeavouring to finish that principal design, he finds that he hath time also, to form his Mind with those obliging Qualities, and Graces, which may adapt him to be a fit Companion in that Blessed Society ; where the Holy Angels, and the Spirits of Just Men made Perfect, (being all of a Piece in their Tempers) do keep up a sweet and happy Communion of Joy and Love, without any such interruptions, as they met withall in the former froward VWorld.

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